



Illinois Environmental Protection Agency · P.O. Box 19276, Springfield, IL 62794-9276

217/782-6760

January 15, 1991

Karen Yeates  
Illinois State Project Officer  
USEPA - Region V  
230 South Dearborn  
Chicago, Illinois 60640

Dear Ms. Yeates:

Please find enclosed the Community Relations Plan for the Beloit Corporation Superfund Site located in Rockton, Illinois. We are requesting your review and written comments on this plan for the Remedial Investigation and Feasibility Study of this project. We would appreciate your comments within 45 days from the date of this letter.

If you have any questions, please contact Greg Michaud, Community Relations Manager, or Michelle Nickey Tebrugge, Community Relations Coordinator, at 217/782-5562.

Sincerely,

William Child  
Manager  
Division of Land Pollution Control

cc: Division File  
Paul Takacs  
Greg Michaud  
Michelle Nickey Tebrugge

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## **COMMUNITY RELATIONS PLAN**

Beloit Corporation  
Rockton  
Winnebago County, Illinois  
January 15, 1991

### **A. OVERVIEW OF COMMUNITY RELATIONS PLAN**

This community relations plan identifies issues of community concern regarding the Beloit Corporation Superfund Site in Rockton, Illinois. It outlines community relations activities to be conducted during the Remedial Investigation and Feasibility Study (RI/FS) which is required at all Superfund sites. The Remedial Investigation (RI) will determine the nature and extent of contamination, as well as characterize the risk to public health and the environment, at the Beloit Corporation Site. The Feasibility Study (FS) will identify and evaluate appropriate cleanup alternatives for remedial action. This site was proposed for inclusion to the National Priorities (often referred to as the Superfund) List (NPL) on June 24, 1988, and listed on the NPL on August 30, 1990.

The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) has prepared this community relations plan to structure a community relations program tailored to the needs of the residents in and near Blackhawk Subdivision, and those residents in Rockton who might be affected by a cleanup of this site.

The IEPA conducts community relations activities to ensure that the local public has input to decisions about Superfund actions and that the affected community are well informed about the Superfund process.

This community relations plan contains the following:

- \* **Capsule Site Description**, including area maps
- \* **Community Background**
- \* **Highlights of Community Relations Program**, including location for Information Repository
- \* **Community Relations Activities**, including chart illustrating timing of these activities
- \* **List of Contacts and Interested Parties**

The information in this plan is based on discussions which began in the Summer, 1988 with several residents in the Blackhawk Subdivision and the surrounding area, file searches, and telephone contacts with local officials. In June, 1990, the IEPA formally notified three companies identified as being Potentially Responsible Parties (PRPs) at the Beloit Corporation Superfund Site. These PRPs are: Beloit Corporation, Soterion/United Recovery, Inc. and Safe-T-Way Manufacturing.

As a result of this notification, Beloit Corporation has expressed its willingness to finance the entire RI/FS and has agreed to sign formally a Consent Decree. This decree is expected to be lodged in Federal Court before the end of January, 1991, by the Illinois Attorney General's Office. The Consent Decree requires completion of an RI/FS at Beloit Corporation's expense, reimbursement by the Beloit Corporation of all past costs and incurred costs necessary to implement the selected remedy in a manner consistent with the National Oil and Hazardous Substances Pollution Contingency Plan (NCP). This contingency plan outlines the basic principles in which cleanups are performed and is applicable to all work performed at the site.

## **B. CAPSULE SITE DESCRIPTION**

The Beloit Corporation Site is located north of Rockton, Illinois, in Winnebago County. Situated about two miles from the northern border of the state, this site covers approximately one square mile. (See Map on Page \_\_\_\_)

(Map showing county location will be included)

It extends over developed and undeveloped commercial and residential property and is bordered to the west by the Rock River; to the north by Prairie Hill Road; to the east by Blackhawk Boulevard; and to the south by an access road projected from the Rock River to Blackhawk Boulevard. (See Map on Page \_\_\_\_)

(Map showing site location will be included)

Beloit Corporation, located at 1165 Prairie Hill Road, has owned its present property since approximately 1957. The Beloit Corporation manufactures machines that produce layered paper products from paper pulp. In addition to the manufacturing plant, the Research and Development (R & D) facility designs and demonstrates the paper making machines.

At the R & D facility, wastewater from the pulp extraction was discharged to three unlined surface lagoons northwest of the facility. The settling paper fiber was periodically removed from the lagoons using a drag line and disposed of at the southern portion of Beloit Corporation's property. Subsequent investigations of this disposal area revealed that this practice continued without a permit until November, 1983 when a permit from IEPA was issued. Shortly after this issuance, Beloit Corporation halted land application of this material due to citizen complaints.

Sludge sampling for Volatile Organic Chemicals (VOCs) was conducted in August, 1983 by IEPA. The results of the bottom sludge samples contained 1,1,1-Trichloroethane, Trichloroethylene, Tetrachloroethylene, Dichloroethane, Dichloroethylene, Ethylbenzene, and Aliphatic Hydrocarbons. Analysis of the paper fiber pile also contained Cyanide. Beloit Corporation reportedly ceased the use of chlorinated solvents and switched to using Di-N-Octyl Phthalate during the Summer 1983.

In September, 1983, Agency personnel met with Beloit Corporation representatives and discussed the use of monitoring wells in conjunction with on site sludge disposal and the possibility of monitoring wells for the entire facility as a permit condition. Groundwater monitoring wells were installed on Beloit Corporation property in 1983 and 1984 to verify contamination from the sludge disposal area.

Semi-annual sampling has been conducted at selected monitoring wells since February, 1984. In addition to the above-mentioned contaminants, Di-N-Octyl Phthalate was also found.

Beloit Corporation has also landfilled bag house dust and waste foundry sand at this site. These disposal areas have been tested and while VOCs have not been detected, these areas may contain significant concentrations of heavy metals.

A preliminary assessment was completed, and a site inspection was conducted by Agency personnel in October and December, 1985, respectively. During the October investigation, three 55 gallon leaking barrels were discovered. Samples of the leakage contained high levels of Methylene Chloride, Carbon Tetrachloride, Trichloroethane, 1,1,2-Trichloroethane, Toluene, Ethylbenzene, and Xylenes.

The Beloit Corporation Site was submitted as an NPL candidate

in March, 1987, and became a proposed NPL site in the Federal Register in June, 1988.

Chemical contamination of drinking water, in private drinking water wells, was found at several locations in Winnebago County during 1986-88. Citizen concern about drinking water contamination lead to release of money from the Environmental Protection Trust Fund for IEPA to study groundwater contamination in Winnebago County. Part of this study focused on groundwater contamination north of Rockton. This study revealed the presence of VOCs in seventeen private drinking water wells in the Blackhawk Subdivision. Proposed drinking water standards have been consistently violated at three of these wells.

### **C. COMMUNITY BACKGROUND**

#### **Community Profile**

The Blackhawk Subdivision is comprised of approximately 65 homes, located outside the city limits of Rockton. Two other homes in the study area are located west of Blackhawk Subdivision next to the Rock River. All of the residents in the study area depend on groundwater for their drinking water and could be potentially threatened by contamination from this site.

The study area for this site is comprised of residents living outside the city limits and include both retirees and young families. The majority of the citizens are long-time neighborhood residents.

Residents living in the Blackhawk Subdivision work in both Rockton, Illinois and the Beloit, Wisconsin area. One operating business, Safe-T-Way Manufacturing, is located within the Blackhawk Subdivision. The Soterion/United Recovery, Inc. was also located in this area, however, it is no longer operating. Buildings associated with this operation are now occupied by new businesses. Taylor Freezer, a major employer in this area, borders the subdivision on the south.

A University of Illinois medical clinic and several small businesses are located near Blackhawk Subdivision on the east side of Blackhawk Boulevard. The City of South Beloit is in the process of developing an industrial park approximately 1/4 mile further east of the study area.

#### **Community Involvement**

Community involvement originated at this site when the

Winnebago County Public Health Department responded to odor complaints in 1980. Pat Marx, a former resident of Blackhawk Subdivision and other family members experienced headaches and skin rashes allegedly due to the odors. Pat Marx; Dr. and Mrs. Ezra Trull, citizens living near to Blackhawk Subdivision; and Ora Larson, Village Trustee, worked together to get private water well sampling conducted in their neighborhood. The effort led to sampling conducted during the Winnebago County Groundwater Study. The community cooperated during the Winnebago Groundwater Study by providing the IEPA access to private drinking water wells. In addition, a few residents also attended a public meeting held by the IEPA at the Wagon Wheel Resort located in Rockton to discuss groundwater sampling results.

The Beloit Daily News and the Rockton Herald covered listing the Beloit Corporation on the NPL in August, 1990. In addition, the Rockford Register Star included this site in a feature section describing several Superfund sites within the vicinity served by this paper.

Community interest in this site can be characterized by two categories: those individuals who exhibit an extremely high degree of interest and those who show little interest. Interest has remained low since Beloit Corporation has been placed on the NPL.

#### Description of Key Community Concerns

The residents, community leaders and local officials expressed the following concerns:

Health: The primary concern that has dominated the majority of citizen interviews appears to be long-term health effects caused from drinking contaminated water. officials about the threat of contamination reaching this well.

Municipal well: One of Rockton's public water wells is in the vicinity of this site, downgradient from the suspected source areas. There is concern from city officials about the threat of contamination reaching this well.

In addition, although issues of potentially declining property values have not been brought up, it is believed that more concern will develop as the field work begins and the RI proceeds.

#### **D. HIGHLIGHTS**

The Community Relations Program for the Beloit Corporation Site is designed to allow the community to learn about and

participate in the Superfund remedial process. The program will also allow citizens to understand groundwater contamination at this site and the hazards these contaminants may pose. To be effective, the Community Relations Program must be gauged according to the community's need for information.

1. Community relations activities will be coordinated between local officials, community leaders, and the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). During the community assessment, the mayor and other village officials requested to be informed of major milestone activities.
2. It is imperative that the community have a clear and accurate understanding of the problems at this site. Upon completion of the RI/FS, information will be provided to concerned residents explaining hazards that may or may not be present, the known extent of contamination, and easily understandable descriptions of contaminants.
3. Since virtually all of the nearby residents use groundwater as a source of drinking water, a survey will be conducted to identify those residences and establishments who (1) utilize wells completed in the hydrogeologic flow system, and (2) are not serviced by municipal water supplies. From this information, a sampling and analysis program will be conducted to monitor water quality from residential wells.
4. Because of the location of this site, news media coverage will be from Illinois and Wisconsin. Local newspapers, and radio and television stations in both states will be informed of any significant findings during the RI/FS. In addition, these media will be notified of any public meetings/hearings.
5. To better help the citizens understand the problem, information regarding groundwater flow will be made available at The Talcott Free Library, 101 East Main Street, Rockton, Illinois (Hours: Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday: 9:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m.; Wednesday and Friday: 9:00 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.; Saturday: 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.). This information will include summaries of past and future investigations.

#### **E. COMMUNITY RELATIONS ACTIVITIES**

The following activities are required for the Beloit Corporation Site community relations program. Figure \_\_\_\_\_ illustrates the timing of each activity during the remedial schedule for the site.

(Chart illustrating community relations activities will be included.)

1. Public comment period on draft Feasibility Study (FS) reports: A minimum 30 day public comment period will be held to allow citizens to express their opinions on the draft FS at the Beloit Corporation Site. Notices will be placed in local newspapers to ensure that the public is made aware of Agency actions. The Agency will consider community opinions before approving decisions on Remedial Design and Remedial Action (RD/RA).
2. Public Hearing and Comment Period on Remedy Selection: A 30 day public comment period (with an option for a 30 day extension) will begin when the fact sheet describing the preferred Remedial Action is circulated. During this public comment period, a public hearing will be held to provide a formal opportunity for the IEPA to answer questions directly and to discuss the recommended action. The hearing should be scheduled as close to the issuance of the above-mentioned fact sheet. These meetings will be held at an easily accessible and suitably-sized building located in the Village of Rockton.
3. Responsiveness Summary: This required document is a part of the Record of Decision (ROD) for this site. The responsiveness summary will summarize public concerns and issues raised during the public comment period for the remedy selection. In addition, the responsiveness summary documents responses made by IEPA to address these concerns.
4. Revision of Community Relations Plan: After the ROD has been signed, an addendum will be written and attached to this Community Relations Plan to describe the community relations activities during the RD/RA phase of this project. The revisions of the community relations plan will:
  - Update facts and verify the information in this community relations plan prepared for the RI/FS.
  - Assess the community relations program to date and indicate if the same or different approaches will be taken during RD/RA.
  - Develop a strategy for preparing the community for future role during RD/RA and ongoing operation and maintenance.

The IEPA will also hold community interviews before the Beloit Corporation Community Relations Plan is revised.



5. Information Repository: The IEPA will place fact sheets, technical summaries, site reports (including the Community Relations Plan), and information on the Superfund program in an information repository. The information repository will be located at the Talcott Free Library.

In addition to these basic requirements for a Community Relations Program at the Beloit Corporation Site, IEPA will undertake the necessary steps to ensure that the community is well informed about site activities and has the opportunity to express its concerns. These steps, and their approximate timing, are as follows:

1. Information contact: Michelle Nickey Tebrugge is designated as the information contact to respond directly to public inquiries regarding site activities.
2. Telephone conversations with local officials and community leaders: The Winnebago County Department of Public Health, the Rockford Regional Illinois Department of Public Health, and local officials will be notified before news releases are issued.
3. Informal meetings with local officials and residents: Small group or individual meetings with local officials and community leaders will be conducted by IEPA when the need arises and at the following technical milestones:
  - \* Completion of the final work plan
  - \* Completion of the final RI report
  - \* Before remedial action starts.

These meetings will further assess citizen interest and concerns and assure that all those interested persons are kept informed. If face to face meetings are not possible, telephone contacts will be utilized.

4. Fact sheets and technical summaries: The IEPA will prepare a fact sheet at the beginning of the RI to inform area residents and other interested citizens about IEPA's site plans and the procedures of the Superfund program. An additional fact sheet will be made available upon completion of the Remedial Investigation describing the nature and extent of contamination. Another fact sheet will be prepared to outline each of the remedial alternatives considered for the Beloit Corporation Site after finalization of the FS. A detailed description of IEPA's preferred remedial alternative will be provided in the Proposed Plan Summary. All fact sheets will be made available at the information repository.

5. News releases to local media: Local newspapers, radio and television stations will be informed by the IEPA of the discovery of any significant findings at the site during the RI/FS. In addition, these media will be notified of any public meetings. News releases may also be issued at the following milestones:

In addition, a separate news release describing Technical Assistance Grants (TAG) will be issued shortly after the announcement of the Consent Decree signing.

Attachment A includes a listing of local and state officials, contacts, interested parties, and local media for the Beloit Corporation Superfund Site.

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